

22. A wide variety of planning systems in Benelux: a wealth or a handicap?

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In this paper an overview of the existing spatial planning systems and recent evolutions in the Benelux countries will be presented.

Within the Benelux, a sub-European intergovernmental co-operation area, 5 widely different planning systems exist abreast each other. This large number is partly the consequence of the 3 planning systems in Belgium, where the competence for spatial planning is laid at the level of regional authorities. Given the fact that the 3 different planning systems in Belgium were formerly rooted in a common basis, the large variety of these planning systems is remarkable

The general approaches of the 5 different planning systems in the Benelux will be characterized as 'mosaic model', 'zooming model', 'crater model' or combinations of them. However, these systems are also evolving, given the changing political orientations and the changing position of spatial planning within these countries.

In addition to this, some specific characteristics will be focused on, such as the number of government levels involved, the role of intermediate levels between central and local governments, the binding/indicative character of strategic plans, the centralization and decentralization tendencies in the planning systems, the position of spatial planning in relation to sectoral planning and the steering power (or the lack of it) of spatial planning.

At last the paper will focus on challenges for effective cross border and transnational cooperation in spatial planning given the wide variety of planning systems. Challenges are generated by differences in planning systems, competences, steering power and so on. Clear arrangements can only be made with knowledge of the neighbours planning systems.

It is an important challenge for organisations such as the Secretariat General of Benelux to organise cross border and transnational cooperation in this context. The Secretariat General initiates, supports and monitor the cooperation in several policy domains, such as spatial planning. It has a long tradition in supporting the work of Special Commission for Spatial Planning and several border Commissions. These are the arenas to discuss and to overcome barrier effects of differing planning systems.

23. Metamorphological spaces: those hot spots where planning policy really addresses societal transformations

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Spatial transformations are an expression in space of societal transformations that are, in their turn, the interpretation of the ambitions of individuals and groups in society, such as biodiversity, health, welfare and employment. A part of these ambitions is expressed in space as spatial claims. Since diverse metamorphological processes occur simultaneously and at the same location, a sustainable mix of these transformations and spatial claims should address diverse consumers of space, diverse spatial scales (not only the scale of the place involved) and diverse spatial dynamics. Spatial transformations aren't static phenomena that take place in a defined or definable area and cannot be captured within functional land use zoning. Take for instance the transformations in 'spaces - in - between', such as the area in between an urban area and the countryside, the area in between an urban area and a harbor area, or the interaction between harbors and logistic activities elsewhere (as extended parts of the harbor area). In an attempt to cope with these spatial transformations in a strategic way, spatial planning should identify prior transformations and 'metamorphological spaces'.

Metamorphological spaces can be internationally important nature areas and harbors with a clear political importance on the one hand, but can also involve spaces with a more complex political interference between divergent, contradictory or not, transformations.

Key words: spatial transformation, societal transformation, place



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